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C O N F I D E N T I A L YEREVAN 000611

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/06/2006

TAGS: PHUM PREL AM BO CHR

SUBJECT: CHR-61: US-EU DEMARCHE ON BELARUS, BUT ARMENIA  
STILL NOT READY TO SUPPORT

REF: A. STATE 56093

1B. YEREVAN 521

Classified By: DCM A.F.Godfrey for reason 1.4 (b,d)

Summary

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11. (C) On April 6, together with the EU Presidency rep, we urged Armenia to vote against a no-action motion on the Belarus resolution at the UNCHR. MFA reps said they appreciated the joint approach and also the substance of the demarche, but said that no decision had yet been taken on how Armenia would vote. Any decision to vote against Belarus, which has a consistent track record of supporting Armenia, would have to be approved by President Kocharian. End Summary.

12. (C) On April 6, DCM and British DHM Richard Hyde met with Deputy Foreign Minister Armen Baiburtian to deliver ref a points and to urge that Armenia vote against a no-action motion on the Belarus resolution and subsequently vote to support passage. As Luxembourg has no representation in Armenia, the UK is acting as the representative of the EU presidency. Delivery of these points was delayed because the UK Embassy had not received instructions. According to Hyde, Luxembourg had failed to inform London and with communications links slow from Brussels, the only way he was able to get the go-ahead to join us was to ask a member of the UK delegation in Geneva to make a direct approach to the Luxembourg delegation.

13. (C) We pressed Baiburtian hard, but he refused to make a commitment, citing reasons similar to those FM Oskanian gave to the Ambassador on March 24 (ref b). Baiburtian said that he recognized the importance we attached to the issue; all of Armenia's senior foreign policy actors knew of the Ambassador's repeated approaches and of DAS Kennedy's intervention with FM Oskanian. This new, joint approach with the EU would also be carefully considered.

14. (C) Baiburtian said that any decision to vote against Belarus would have to be approved personally by President Kocharian. With the Putin visit now in the past, perhaps the issue could be seen in a different light, he speculated. He agreed to inform us as soon as a decision is reached on how Armenia would cast its vote.

Comment

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15. (C) While it remains unlikely that Armenia will join us to allow an open debate on Belarus, this joint approach with the EU ratcheted up the pressure and will prompt a new discussion of how the Armenian delegation will vote.

EVANS